**DLA: Summarizing, Paraphrasing, and Quoting**

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**Objective/Purpose:** Quoting, paraphrasing and summarizing are ways that writers use, or present, information from outside sources. This DLA will help students learn the difference among these techniques and show the best situations in which to use each one.

**Materials Needed**: Ideally, students should bring a research source with them that they need to summarize, paraphrase and quote from. If they haven’t, you can find and print a short article from the web.

**To the Tutor**: First show and discuss the **definition** of each term with the student:

* A **summary** of a passage will state its major points, but not its minor or supporting details. It is always **shorter**, sometimes much shorter, than the original piece or passage. Written credit must be given to the original writer.
* A **paraphrase** of a passage will repeat the same information as the original but in the student’s own words. The wording needs to be substantially different from the original. A paraphrase is just about **the same length** as the original passage. Again, written credit must be given to the original writer.
* A **quotation** is the repetition of the **exact words** of a speaker or writer **enclosed in quotation marks**, or indented in block style for long quotations. The speaker or writer is, of course, credited.

**When to use summary and paraphrase:**

Most ofyour research paper should be written in your own words and supplemented either by summarizing or paraphrasing. Paraphrasing sources, rather than quoting, lets more of your own thinking come through. The source must be cited because you are using the ideas and the work of another person. The credit (author or title) can either be given in a signal phrase before the source information, or in parentheses after it

**When to use direct quotation:**

Use quotation sparingly. An overabundance of direct quotes removes your presence from the paper. Keep in mind:

* **Choose to quote if the passage is especially well written and powerful. Quote when you can't say it any better than the author did, but paraphrase when you can.**
* **Also, use a direct quotation if what the author says is especially controversial and you will be criticizing the words or doubting the accuracy.**
* **For literary analyses, quote any passage you will be commenting on in detail.**

**Example of a paraphrase with citation:** In the U.S., before the average child is twelve, he will have witnessed over 8,000 murders on television (Sullivan 677).

**Example of a quotation with citation:** Rolling Stone reporter Randall Sullivan notes that after the Springfield school shootings, “The newspapers trotted out the now-familiar numbers: the 8,000 on-screen murders that the average American child will witness before finishing elementary school” (677). (*Note: since the author is named in a signal phrase, the citation only includes the page number.)*

**Student Practice: You can do all or some of these steps.**

Students: Use one of your research sources to complete the following exercise.

1. Who is your author, and what are his/her credentials? In other words, what makes your author qualified to write on this subject? Knowing this will help you introduce the material.

2. Choose a few paragraphs from your source that contain evidence that you plan to use in your essay. Write a paragraph in which you introduce your author and establish his/her credibility (expertise), summarize the evidence, comment on its significance, and provide a citation (page # only since you are naming the author in the text).

3. When you paraphrase, you use the writer’s ideas but put them in your own words.

**Original passage**: Psychologist Nancy Swenson explains that “For people who have never had an issue with food, eating is a very simple process” (55).

**Your paraphrase:** Psychologist Nancy Swenson points out that for people with eating disorders, the simple act of eating can become very complex (55).

Now choose three important sentences from your research source and write a paraphrase for each of these sentences. (See the examples for the correct citation format.)

4. Choose a section of the text that would be good to quote. Remember that your quotations should be something that the writer says so well that you wouldn’t want to change anything. Using these guidelines, write out your quotation. Be sure to introduce it by naming the speaker and providing any necessary background for the quotation. After quoting, be sure to comment on the significance of this evidence. (See the examples above for the correct citation format.)

5. Review an essay in which you responded to an article. Using what you have learned about summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting, write an evaluation of your use of these techniques. What would you do differently if you revised this essay now?

**Review Activity:** Tutors, ask the students to recap what they have learned about the difference between summary, paraphrase, and quotation. Ask them in what cases summary or paraphrase is best, and in what cases direct quotation is best.